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Opening extract from
Walter Tull's Scrapbook

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My name is Walter Tull. This is my scrapbook.

1888-1898

My oldest brother,
William.

My sis, Cecilia.
(We call her
Cissy sometimes.)

ME!

Walter Daniel John Tull,
Born 28th April 1888



Edward, my brother -
two years older
than me.

My dad

Baby Ettie. Possibly the
noisiest baby in the world!

My family

My big sister Bertha isn't in this photo. She died when she was a little girl. My mum isn't in the picture either.

Here she is. Her name was Alice and she was from a Folkestone family, the Palmers. I think she was the best mum in the world - but she kept getting ill and by the time the photo of us all was taken, she was dead. She died two weeks before my 7th birthday.

We all live together at

My mum, Alice



ST WALTON STREET,
HYTHE, FOLKESTONE,
ENGLAND;
THE WORLD.

I go to North Board School in Black Bull Road. The school is just at the top of our road. We can see the classrooms and playground from our front windows and I can walk there in a minute. My brother Eddie gets there in half a minute. He has longer legs.



My dad, Daniel Tull, comes from Barbados.

It was a long journey across the sea to a new life in Folkestone. On the way over, he worked as a ship's carpenter.

My dad's parents were slaves in Barbados. But my dad was never a slave. He was a paid carpenter - and proud of it. He was a good man and a hard worker, but he couldn't manage to work and keep the house and children after my mum died, so my Aunt Clara came to help run the house. She and my dad got married and she became my stepmother. They had a baby girl, Miriam.

So there were lots of us. We all slept in two beds, one for the boys and one for the girls.



10th DECEMBER 1897.

DAD DIED.

HEART ATTACK.

Aunt Clara isn't my real mum, so we are now orphans. Money is tight. Stepmum really tried, but she just couldn't look after all of us. She has good friends in the local Methodist church and they have found a place for us. Me and my brother Eddie are being sent away on Valentine's Day to be looked after at a Methodist Children's Home.



The Home 1898-1900

The children's home is miles away, in London. It's our first train journey ever - and the first time we've ever been out of Folkestone. The East End of London is very different from where we grew up. Everything is big and noisy. It's exciting, but frightening too. I tried to be brave when our step-mum waved goodbye and we went through the big iron gates into our new home.



Bonner Road Home

There are 320 children. We have our own school with lessons every day. Doctor Stephenson runs the Home. He is strict, but makes sure we have two hours off every evening. That's when I play cricket and, best of all, football. I am really good at football - I even made the Bonner Road School team!

BONNER ROAD

BONNER ROAD
CHILDREN'S HOME
Hackney,
Care of Dr Stephenson

The Home is enormous. It is a group of big houses each looked after by a "sister". Edward and I are both in the same house. It is carefully organised and everyone knows exactly what they have to do. We all have jobs.



Bonner Road School team



My timetable

6.20 a.m. - Get up and make beds. Wash well and quickly (with VERY cold water).
Chores - Clean boots - at least 15 pairs, or wash floors. I prefer polishing boots. Scrubbing floors hurts your hands - and knees! When you finish your chores, Sister inspects your work and if you pass inspection, you go for breakfast.
Breakfast - Bread and marmite with cocoa (with skin on top. Yuck!)
 Prayers in the school chapel (or church in the town - twice on Sundays).
School - Lessons for the youngsters, plus training in printing or baking for the older children.
Lunch - One course - soup, pie or fish (plenty more skin. Yuck!)
School - Lessons for everyone. Arithmetic. Reading. Bible.
Personal hygiene - Thorough strip wash. Scrub. Then Sister's inspection of our scrubbed ears, necks, hands, nails.
 5 p.m. tea - Bread and marmite with cocoa (even more yuck!)
 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. - Two hours' free time (cricket or football for me, plus writing letters home)
 8 p.m. - Bed, lights out.



HOW TO WASH A FLOOR AT BONNER ROAD SCHOOL

Take a tin bucket, scrubbing brush, cloth and bar of soap.
 Fill bucket with cold water.
 Scrub your line of floorboards.
 Change the water after every fourth board.



I am learning to be a printer - so that I can earn my living when I leave the Home. The best times here are when I get a letter from the family in Folkestone. We both get letters and cards and sometimes visits too. That is the very best bit of all.

14th November 1900

Eddie has been adopted. He's leaving the Home and going all the way to Glasgow, in Scotland, to live with a dentist's family. It's hundreds of miles away. I am glad his new family are going to give him a good education and a chance in life, but still...

Now I'm on my own.

Good luck in your new home

Walter

I'll miss you

T
U
L

Football! 1900-1909

I'm finally out of Bonner Road. At first I was in a hostel run by the Methodists. Now I've moved into digs with a nice family. It's almost like a real home.

My cricket and football are being noticed. A friend suggested I write to **CLAPTON FOOTBALL CLUB** to ask for a trial. That was a hard letter to write. I wrote it over and over again until I got it right. Then it took some nerve to post it. But I have been given a trial and...

THEY WANT ME!

Six weeks ago I was playing in the Park for the Bonner Road School team. Now I am playing for **CLAPTON F.C.** - one of the best amateur teams in the country. I am training hard and making lots of progress.

My record at Clapton F.C.

October 1908: First trial match. We win 6-1.

December 26th 1908: I play for the first team.

1909: I am now a regular player and we win... **EVERYTHING!** We win the Football Association Amateur Challenge Cup, the London Senior Cup and the County Amateur Cup. An incredible record!!!



Clapton F.C. cup-winners



The newspapers are beginning to notice me and some of the big football clubs have noticed me too...

In April, **Tottenham Hotspur** asked me to try for their reserve team against **West Ham** and then **Brighton**. What a chance!



I did well, so then I played for Spurs again in a friendly, and they have asked me to go on tour with them - to South America! For two whole months!!!

In 1909 I set off on an enormous ship for a football tour of South America - Argentina and Uruguay.

Imagine me - a big star on a big ship going to Argentina!

Tottenham Hotspur F.C. have just asked me to sign for them. I wasn't sure about becoming a professional and taking money for playing

sport. I think sport should build your character and make you stronger in body and mind. But in the end I did sign. It is better to be paid out in the open rather than pretending to be an amateur and taking money under the table, which some clubs have offered me. It is always best to be honest.

My football kit

Shirt - thick, warm and good for a cold day - but when it's wet it's like wearing a heavy, damp sponge.

Shorts - we call them "knickers". They are long and loose and they soak up the mud.

Boots - heavy leather with great big studs. They can really hurt if you get kicked.

Ball - made of thick leather with a big strong laces. It soaks up water and weight. When it's wet, it's like heading a brick. Ouch!



"Walter Tull... with his clever footwork is undoubtedly the catch of the season"

From the LONDON FOOTBALL STAR

Spurs 1909-1911

On 20th July 1909 I signed for Tottenham Hotspur. They say I'm the first black British professional out field player.

I got a signing-on fee. TEN POUNDS! Ten whole pounds – and a wage of FOUR POUNDS a week. This is the maximum – and they gave it to me! While waiting for the football season to start I played cricket. It's a good way to spend a sunny day. The Spurs players took on the

CHelsea team, and I scored a good number of runs – and took a couple of wickets. We footballers like to play cricket in the off season.



ME AGAINST MANCHESTER UNITED



Me in my Spurs kit. A proud day.



ME IN THE SPURS TEAM

For my first Spurs match I took over from Vivian Woodward, the Spurs star centre forward and Olympic champ, so I had to do well. It was Spurs' first ever Division One game after promotion. I played against **MANCHESTER UNITED**.

Final score:
a **2-2** draw.

Tottenham Hotspur.
APRIL 18th, 1911.

5.0 p.m.

FULHAM.

Red Stars, Black Knights.

Fryer

Walker

Marshall

Burns

Boydell

Turner

Scramble

Newman

Brown

Clark

Morris

Tull

Reeves



BRISTOL

I had a terrible time at the BRISTOL match. Every time I got the ball, the crowd broke into jeers and insults about my skin colour. It was hard to carry on, but I made it to the end of the game.

A journalist wrote about the match in the

LONDON FOOTBALL STAR.

The Star

Football and Colour Prejudice

... Tull is the Hotspurs' most brainy forward. Candidly, he has much to contend with on account of his colour. His tactics were absolutely beyond reproach, but he became the butt of the ignorant partisan... a section of the spectators made a cowardly attack upon him in language lower than Billingsgate... Let me tell the Bristol hooligans... that Tull is so clean in mind and method as to be a model for all white men who play football. Tull was the best forward on the field.



ME



I know I played well – everybody says so, and I tried not to react to all the insults that people threw at me. I kept my head... but somehow I'm losing heart. I try not to let it get to me, but it's hard.

A New Start 1911-1914

I've been through a bad patch where I lost sight of my aims and my energy leaked away. I lost heart, I lost form. But bit by bit I've regained my spirits, gathered my courage and started again. I've been transferred (for a huge fee) to **NORTHAMPTON** - a big team these days.

LIVE LIKE A LION
Proud and Strong.

I've settled down well at Northampton, made some good friends and played some great games. I am popular with the team and the crowd. I've now played more than 100 times for Northampton. And I've scored four goals in one match! Best of all, **GLASGOW RANGERS** want me to play for them. They're one of the top teams in Scotland. If I transfer to Glasgow I'll be living near my brother Edward! I can hardly wait.

YOUNG MEN OF BRITAIN !! THE GERMANS SAID YOU WERE NOT IN EARNEST

Extract from *Frankfurter Zeitung* -
The young Britons prefer to exercise their long limbs on the football ground rather than to receive them to any sort of risk in the service of their country.



WAR

There's been talk in the papers about trouble in Europe. Now it looks as if we are at war with Germany and the Army is looking for volunteers. Posters have started to advertise for a special battalion made up of footballers. When I saw the posters I didn't think twice. I have to stand up for my country.

No more football for me for a while.
No transfer to Glasgow.

We are at war.



GREAT BRITAIN DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY. The Daily Mirror

DECLARATION OF WAR BY GREAT BRITAIN AFTER UNSATISFACTORY REPLY TO YESTERDAY'S ULTIMATUM.



Marching Off to War

December 1914

I've joined up. I am now **Private Walter Tull** of the 17th Middlessex Regiment – the Footballers Battalion – ready to fight for King and Country. Everyone in the Football Battalion is either a player, a supporter or has worked for a club. We are training and parading and marching. I have a very different sort of kit now – in khaki. All the soldiers in my unit are good men and I'm sure we will do well.

My uniform

Heavy khaki jacket with room for a shirt and a sweater – or several – underneath.

Plenty of pockets and webbing cloth belts.

We also carry a huge, heavy coat called a "great coat".

Putties – to stop your trouser-legs getting caught on wire.

Boots – Very strong, very heavy, very uncomfortable.

Peaked cap.

Metal helmet – to be worn in battle.

Canvas bag with gasmask

Plus kit bag containing ground sheet and blanket, rifle with canvas cover to keep out mud, mess tin (that's what we eat our food in) and tool for digging.

All this stuff is so heavy that when we tried the full kit on Skinny Albert, he just fell over backwards and lay there waving his legs in the air like a helpless beetle!



My battalion marching



Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag

Smile!

Battle phrase book

Whizz-bang – Enemy cannon. It's named after the sound it makes. If you hear a WHIZZ, it will be followed by a BANG, and you'll have copped it.

Copped it – Killed.

Jack Johnson – A shot from a heavy cannon, (named after a heavyweight boxer, because it packs a very big punch!)

No Man's Land – The area between your trenches and the enemy's. A very, very dangerous place.

Over the top – Leaving your trenches to attack the enemy. Maybe the last time you see your friends alive.

Shrapnel – The jagged bits of cannon shell that come flying at you. Very sharp and very nasty.

Sniper – A soldier who shoots at anything sticking out of a trench. It is a very good idea to keep your head down!

Stand to – Standing in your trenches, waiting for an enemy attack. There's a stand-to twice every day, at first light and at dusk.

When the whistle blows – Not like a referee's whistle! This is the officer's signal to leave the trenches and attack.

It's got your name on it – The bullet or cannon shell that's coming to get you.

Trench Foot – Horrible foot-rot that you get from standing in mud and water for weeks and never drying out.

What in the end settle this war

TRAIN MEN

It is YOUR DUTY to become on

At last we are off to France. After months of training and marching and polishing we are going to the front. We should be in the trenches by Christmas.

We keep our courage high by singing as we march.

There is lots to learn. It's a whole new world in the front line – with its own new words.



A Christmas Miracle

December 1915

I'm in the Front Line. I'm cold. I'm wet. I'm muddy. I'm exhausted. My ears are still ringing with the sounds of explosions. I've heard and seen things I could never have imagined – not even in my worst nightmares. But I've heard of a miracle, too. . . Private Jones told us about it. We were huddled in our trench trying to shelter from the biting cold when he started his story:

"It was cold and frosty and almost midnight on December 24th last year. Christmas Eve – and I was spending it in an icy trench. I saw something glimmering not far away. Then I saw another glimmer and another. The enemy soldiers had lit candles all around their trench! That's when we heard it – a clear German voice ringing out in the frosty night, singing a Christmas carol. We all held our breath and listened as the German soldier sang his version of 'Silent Night'. The last line rang out clear as a bell.

It was heartbreakingly beautiful in that murky setting. Back home in Wales they call me 'Jones the Voice', so I was the one who stood up and sang 'Silent Night' back to them. Then it began. We all sang together, British and Germans celebrating peace on Earth and goodwill to all men. We shouted Christmas greetings.

"Merry Christmas"
"Frohe Weihnachten"

Finally, one by one, we crawled out of our muddy holes and walked across No Man's Land to shake hands and exchange greetings with the enemy. One of the men had a football, so we played a match with the Germans! There weren't many rules and there were about 50 men on each side – but such spirit! No shots were fired that night. Nor the next day."

I found Private Jones' story hard to believe, but later I heard that peace had broken out like this all along the battlefield. Up to 100,000 men had stopped shooting and started talking and giving presents. The Germans and the British gave each other pound notes or mark notes, cigarettes, sweets and even coat buttons.

It was a Christmas miracle.



The Christmas Truce

